PROCEEDINGS
of
THE TRAVANCORE SRI MULAM ASSEMBLY.

(OFFICIAL REPORT.)

SECOND ASSEMBLY.

TWELFTH SESSION, 1943/1118.

Wednesday, the 2nd June 1943/19th Edavom 1118.

The Assembly met in the Legislative Chamber at 12 Noon with the Dewan-President in the Chair.

NEW MEMBERS.

The following members took the oath and signed the rolls :

1. Mr. I. C. Chacko (*Chief Engineer, Roads, Irrigation and Miscellaneous*).
2. Mr. A. Gopala Menon (*Director of Public Instruction*).
3. Mr. G. Narayanan Tampi (*Secretary to Government*).
4. Mr. N. Ramamurti (*Superintendent of Road Transport*).
5. Mr. S. N. Ure (*Public Service Commissioner*).

PRESIDENT : Order, order.

For the same reason that I assigned on the first day when I spoke before question time, with the indulgence of the House, I wish to make a small statement on a matter arising out of what took place in the House yesterday.

I think honourable members will know that on account of the irregularity arising in the matter of purchase and distribution of paddy and rice the following action has been taken by Government. In respect of one Tahsildar a public enquiry has been ordered and this enquiry will range over his activities in respect of food control measures. Another Tahsildar has been compelled to take leave on account of the irregularity in the purchase and distribution of paddy and rice. His explanation is under consideration. A third Tahsildar has been asked to go on leave for three months and departmental enquiry has been ordered against him in regard to the irregularities in the administration of food control measures. A fourth Tahsildar has been fined Rs. 200 and a departmental enquiry has been ordered in his case also. The question also arose on account of the suspicion that, taking advantage of their position, they are acquiring properties and that similar acquisitions have been made by the Proverthicars. The Registration Department has been evincing the greatest interest in regard to the purchase and sales and this matter is engaging the serious attention of Government. With regard to another Tahsildar a report has been received and it is under consideration and very urgent departmental

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[President.]

enquiry has been ordered Thus it will be seen than out of 32 Tahsildars, in the case of 5 Tahsildars departmental enquiry has already been started.

The next point I wish to make clear is with regard to the Transport Department. A number of questions have been asked about the Department. I may say that the position is at present engaging the serious attention of Government. The problem has become very, very acute because traffic has been so heavy and has been so aggravated after the outbreak of the war, that our motor buses are really unable to grapple with the problem of transport. We cannot get any spare parts, we cannot get any replacements of the vehicles. I may tell the honourable members that after personal requests pressed very strongly upon the Government of India priority has been given to us. Out of about 30 or 40 vehicles that were asked for priority has been given to us in respect of 15 vehicles. These 15 vehicles we may expect here in the course of a few weeks. At the same time the Government of India have also issued a notification that spare parts should be purchased by us on our responsibility from any dealer who has got those spare parts; but they have also stated that that possibility will be exhausted very soon, because the notification itself says that after a month or so, that privilege will also be taken away. Difficult as our plight is, it has been specially difficult for people outside the State to understand the nature of our difficulty. Elsewhere there are a large number of railway roads. Railway traffic is possible elsewhere. Only two means of traffic are possible in Travancore backwater and motor transport. Quite 50 per cent. of the vehicles are really beyond repair. Anyhow such use as can be made out of it will be made. That is one aspect.

The second aspect is, that the desire of the people to go from place to place has increased tremendously within the last few months or years. Every bus is overloaded. It was fortunate for me to see the condition when I quite recently travelled practically throughout the length and breadth of the State without having given previous notice to the Police, Revenue and other departments. The result of it has been that I was able to see exactly the extent of the overcrowding. As soon as the Dewan's car is sighted overcrowded vehicles stop on siding and a number of people are asked to stand behind the hedges. I actually saw the extent of overcrowding, but I can see exactly what the difficulty is. I have always found this on the occasion on which I have travelled without giving previous notice. I have now given a general order that no further tours of mine should be announced to the Peishkars or the Police Department, where I am going, when I will be going etc. I shall thus be more in touch with the things that actually take place.

Now I find three evils. First of all at the starting station, there is a huge crowd trying to get into the vehicle—I have also found that this is on account of the fact that whenever the Dewan's tour is not

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advertised, the traffic constable is not on the road. The Traffic Constable will be some where else. On many occasions, the Police Department has been told about it. As a result of the crowd, there is a tremendous rush and children and women get the worst of that rush.

In Europe, excepting France, it is not so. In France this is exactly what happens. As a result of very severe police measures they have taken for a long number of years, whether at the Railway platform or at the ticket office in the Railway Station, if a thousand people stand, they will only come in queue, one after another. That system has not yet been employed in this country, with the result that young children are sometimes trampled upon. Such cases have come to my notice.

Secondly the drivers are assorted with others. Room is not given for the drivers.

Thirdly the drivers get themselves funky when some important person is inside. I found that on one occasion in addition to 50 persons in the bus, there were 4 people sitting on the bonnet and three people on the steps behind. I did not know until that occasion, that people could ride on the bonnets of motor buses. Apparently that is the tradition. It must be remembered that in the United States, the richest nation in the world, there is no private car allowed to people. Now 80 per cent of the public bus companies have been commandered by the State. In England the case is practically the same. In Delhi, members of council, if they go to the office in the morning by car, they return home walking. It will be found that if people go to Delhi and want to get a gallon of petrol they will have practically to exercise all the influence that they have with the highest authorities in the Kingdom beginning with the Viceroy. This is the exact position so far as Delhi is concerned. Now in Bombay and Madras the case is more or less the same.

The petrol situation is serious. But our tyre situation is even more serious than the petrol situation. We have been given one-third or one-fourth of our legitimate quota of tyres and that has been given to us with a distinct statement that it is done as a matter of favour to the Travancore Government. That is the exact position. I am therefore arranging the following measures.

Firstly, in every bus two constables will travel, one in the front seat and one in the back seat. It will be difficult for the constables plus the conductor to receive bribes, because one may be a check on the other. In any case two constables will be travelling in every bus that goes up and down the State. That is the first arrangement that has been made.

These constables will be armed. The function of these constables will be to prevent the people rushing and they will allow people to get into a bus only one by one. According to what is done all over India today, the maximum capacity of a bus will be enhanced by 50

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[President.]

per cent. That is, if the ordinary loading capacity which has been utilised until now is 40, now 60 people will be allowed to get into a bus. That is the rule followed in Madras and Bombay. There is no other way. But the 60 people will not be allowed to get into the bus at the starting station. One seat will be kept vacant whatever may be the crowd and rush. That seat will be kept vacant for intermediate passengers. Supposing a bus goes from Trivandrum to Kottarakara or Quilon, people may wish to get in in intermediate stations. In order to accommodate them an appropriate seat will be kept vacant in every bus. If all this means that public travel will have to be restricted, it *will have* to be restricted. There is no other way. The same Police arrangement will be made in the stopping station also. At the stopping station the number of people that get down and those that press in order to get in create a great deal of trouble. The Police will be there and they will take the proper precaution. I am going to test the efficiency of the Police Department by the way in which they carry-out this work.

Finally and the most important thing is that as in the case of most travellers on motor vehicles, it is bad enough when a prominent man is inside the vehicle, because the Peishkar's car can never go slower than an Assistant Peishkar's car, an Assistant Peishkar's car cannot go slower than somebody else's car, and the cars of officials cannot go slower than those of non-officials. That is one system of psychology. The other system is more complicated. When the master is not in the car, the driver's sense of dignity impels him to enhance the degree of his master's official position and therefore the Bhaktivilas car overtakes every other car, because the Dewan happens to hold the chief position in the State and I have punished my driver for that. The cars belonging to Bhaktivilas—I do not mention any other car—have got a tendency, because the master is not inside, of overtaking every other car. Similarly the bus drivers do not wish to give place to any other private car unless they hear the horn of the Dewan's car. In order to prevent all these things I am going to fix a maximum rate of speed which will mean that people will have to travel slow. The Travancore Government will not allow the Bus or Car drivers to wage a miniature war against the people. We are alive to the very strict instructions issued to ensure a sedatness of progression. But the more important thing is this. Just at the time when the bus is started, people want to go round the bus like a *pradikshinam* in order to get in by some way which is not permitted. We have to take very great care in these matters because accidents have occurred. In saying all these, I am not uttering a single word of complaint or censure against these at the head of the Department. I know that Mr. Salter and Mr. Ramamurti have been working heart and soul in order to ensure the success of the Department and they have been trying to use all their power for the same. But a stage has now arrived when some arbitary measures will have to be taken to deal

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with the transport situation and I have indicated the general policy of the Government with regard to the transport system. These rules will have to exist for some considerable time to come, because very soon it will become impossible for any private bus owner to run his bus on the road. He will not get tyre, he will not get petrol and he will not get spare parts. Government may succeed for some time more. As a matter of fact I have great doubt about the next five years. Every government in India will have to own its State Transport and I think they will follow the example of Travancore. It must be borne in mind that the number of vehicles available will be fewer and the pace will be slower and there would be certain restrictions as to the number of people who may go from place to place. Of course a lawyer who wants to appear in a Court situated at a distant place may have to get into the bus. Sometimes it may not be possible and he will have to lose the fee. I am afraid those are sacrifices which are essential and they cannot be dispensed with.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Paddy lands.

111. *MR. M. R. NARAYANA PILLAI (*Tiruvalla*): Will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) the acreage of paddy lands converted for sugarcane cultivation since 1112;

(*b*) the acreage of paddy lands on which tapioca is actually cultivated;

(*c*) the acreage of paddy lands converted as garden lands and cocoanut plantations since 1112; and

(*d*) the total area of paddy lands under cultivation in Travancore in 1108 and on 1-1-1118 M. E. respectively?

MR. G. NARAYANAN TAMPI (*Secretary to Government*): (*a*) 3,685·77 acres.

(*b*) 7,332·02 acres.

(*c*) 5,189·17 acres.

(*d*) 6,16,742·10 acres in 1108 M. E.
6,22,072·50 acres on 1-1-1118 M. E.

Lands for paddy and tapioca cultivation.

112. *MR. VARKALA K. MADHAVAN (*Chirayinkil* cum *Nedumangad*): Will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) whether Government lands are available in Nedumangad and Chirayinkil taluks for—

(i) paddy cultivation, and

(ii) tapioca cultivation; and

(*b*) if the answer to the above is in the affirmative, the action they have taken to bring under cultivation all lands available?

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